

CINCINNATI WEEKLY HERALD, AND PHILANTHROPIST.

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PUBLISHED DAILY, BY
Gamattei Butler, Jr.
AT FIVE DOLLARS A YEAR.

THE WEEKLY HERALD,
AND PHILANTHROPIST,

IS PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING, BY

Gamattei Butler, Jr.

AT CINCINNATI.

At One dollar a year, always payable in advance,
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WEEKLY HERALD AND PHILANTHROPIST.

Monday, February 3, 1845.

The Indians--Their Condition and Prospects.

One of the most important documents submitted annually to Congress, is the report of the Commissioner on Indian Affairs. A melancholy interest is felt in watching the movements of the original possessors of this continent, now struggling, though too late it is to be feared, to maintain their existence by adopting the habits of civilized life. And this interest is deepened, as we see the white man stretching his rod of empire over the shores of the Pacific, and gradually, but fatally narrowing the hunting grounds of the dwellers in their solitudes. Already has fearful apprehension seized the hearts of these helpless ones, and they begin to speak in deprecating tones, and to the formidable strangers who have appeared among them.

A brief review of the report referred to will be instructive:

The number of Indians now in the Territory west of the Mississippi, natives of that country, is

168,290

Present number of those removed,

85,473

Remaining east,

31,587

Whole number west of the river,

253,763

Whole number east and west,

285,350

Of the indigenous tribes west, the most powerful are the following:

The Alapaches, numbering

20,280

Comanches,

19,200

Eutaws,

19,200

Pagans,

3,000

Pawnees,

12,500

Siouxs,

25,000

The largest tribes of the emigrating Indians, are:

The Cherokees, numbering

26,911

Choctaws,

19,410

Creeks,

25,338

It is painful to see the population of the latter decreasing; and we have no doubt, that could accurate annual returns of all the tribes be obtained, a continual decrease of the whole would be demonstrated.

No removals have been made during the last twelve months, except of sixty Chickasaws, who voluntarily emigrated from the State of Mississippi; but contracts have been made for the removal of the Miamis, in the State of Indiana, and the Choctaws, numbering about 7000, who have remained in that of Mississippi.

A third attempt to negotiate with the Comanchee and other wild tribes of Indians, treaties of friendship, in connection with the government of Texas, was made last autumn, in order to secure the border settlers from destructive depredations. The result is not yet known, but hopes are entertained of a favorable issue.

Part of the report deserves special attention. When the Wyandots were removed from Ohio, the United States solemnly stipulated to pay them the full value of their improvements, ceded by them in this State and in Michigan; the valuation to be made by ten persons, to be appointed by the President of the U. S. States, who should be sworn faithfully to do justice to the parties; and the amount to be paid at such time after the 1st of April, 1843, as might be acceptable to the Wyandots. Our government had the whole matter in its own hands. The appraisers were appointed, but their report not having been received when the estimators were made at the last session of Congress, the sum of \$30,000 was put down as the supposed value of the Wyandot improvements. Subsequently the appraisers made their report, estimating the improvements at \$125,397. The Department, although deeming the valuation excessive, very properly held that the United States were bound by the treaty to pay the money; especially as there was no evidence or allegation of fraud, and so informed the proper committee. But Congress refused to appropriate the required sum, and the Executive therupon ordered a re-appraisal of the lands! The report of the values, this time, made the valuation \$65,943, less than the first appraisement by \$60,153 24!

More petty and contemptible conduct, never disgraced a great nation. The handful of Wyandots, peaceful, industrious and happy, must be dispossessed of their lands, banished from the graves of their fathers. The United States Government assumes the sole prerogative of valuing their lands, and binds itself by treaty obligation to pay them promptly the amount of such valuation, when made by its own appraisers. The Indians repose upon its good faith and generosity. The appraisement is made--but what does our just and generous Government do? Horror-stricken at the idea of paying these poor creatures, once lords of the soil now usurped by white men, some forty or fifty thousand dollars more than the exact value of their improvements, it coolly violates the treaty, repudiates its promises, and orders another appraisement, to see whether it cannot drive a better bargain with the six hundred and twenty victims of its power! The scoundrels, who sneakingly and in the dark, does on a small scale, acts of injustice which he would not dare to perpetrate in his dealings before the world, is branded as one traitor and wretched. If he does not act out the part of the highway robber, it is because his cowardice restrains his ruffianism. Who does not know that, had the Government made such a contract with a Power able to hold it responsible, it would as soon have thought of eating fire, as of thus swallowing its own words? For God's sake, if Congress has one lingering feeling of virtue or shame left, let it appropriate at once the full amount of the first appraisement--and that will fill infinitely short of a just compensation to these poor creatures for the injury we have inflicted upon them.

There are other parts in the Report we notice with less dissatisfaction. The Sioux and Chippewas as far back as tradition reaches, previous to the year 1842, were at deadly strife with each other. Both tribes were eminently ferocious and warlike. But, in 1842, under the mediation of our Government, a compact of amity was concluded between them, which has had the happy effect of restraining their hostility ever since. This shows what may be done, by discreet management, even with savages.

The Ottowas and Chippewas of Michigan, are rapidly improving. A majority of them is far advanced, so socially and morally, as to be qualified for citizenship. They have addressed a memorial to the President, praying that they "may have a permanent location in the land of their birth, and ultimately the rights and privileges of American citizens." Many of them are connected by blood and marriage with the white people in their neighborhood, and the Legislature of Michigan has favorably considered their memorial.

The report speaks in strong terms of condemnation of the infernal traffic in whisky which is doing more than all other causes combined, to ruin the Indian.

"Worse for the red man, however, than the flood and army worm, is the traffic in whisky, to which our own citizens lend themselves from the most contemptible and wretched motives--Outraging every principle of morality, law, and the dictates of humanity, it deliberately places the instrument of destruction in his hand, and persuades him to use it, brutalizing him, and making victims of his wife and children, that they may fraudulently pick his pocket and strip his back of the blanket that covers it."

The opinion, however, is expressed, that the vice of drunkenness is not so prevalent as it was in former years--not because the whites have grown more merciful, but because of the improvement in the morals of the Indians themselves. The laws of the United States against this abominable traffic among these untutored people, are by no means efficient--

"And is it not true, sir, that you have encouraged us to be bad?" asked one of my colored fellow, Sam; a man of twenty-five or thereabouts, lodging at the Pearl Street House?

"I rather suspect that I have," said the Quaker, in a quiet, meditative tone, as if thinking the matter over with himself.

"Well, will go to him and see what business he has with his wife."

The Quaker was sitting at the door of his shop, with a round, rosy, good-humored face, so expressive of placidity and satisfaction, that it was difficult to approach in real feeling.

"If you name Simpkins?" demanded Alfred, a voice whose natural urbanity was somewhat sharpened by vexation.

"I wished to inquire whether you have seen anything of my colored fellow, Sam; a man of twenty-five or thereabouts, lodging at the Pearl Street House?"

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